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THE
OTTAWA RIVER CANAL SYSTEM

SPEECH DELIVERED BY

JOSEPH TASSÉ, M. P.,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THE 20TH APRIL, 1885.

The Ottawa Canal and the Pacific Railway must be constructed, and no voice would be raised against the great national work, which would open the Western States and colonies to the sea-board.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.

MONTREAL :

IMPRIMERIE GÉNÉRALE, 45 JACQUES-CARTIER SQUARE.

1886

With Mr. Tassé's Compliments

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INTRODUCTORY LETTERS.

LETTER FROM MR. SHANLY, M. P.

OTTAWA, 18th July, 1885.

Joseph Tassé, Esq., M. P.

Ottawa.

DEAR SIR,

I have read with pleasure your speech delivered in the House of Commons, on the subject of the "Ottawa and French River's Navigation" project. Your views on the importance to the future of Canada of the perfecting of that great natural route between the upper lakes and the Harbour of Montreal are in no way exaggerated. The work must engage the attention of the Government and the country before long, as our great North-West begins to overflow with surplus products, to the value of which cheap—the cheapest possible—transportation will be so essential. I wrote upon and advocated the "Improvements of the Ottawa" more than a quarter of a century ago, and having never shifted my belief in the immense importance of the scheme, am gratified to see that you, a young man, have taken the matter up boldly and earnestly, and that in your advocacy of this truly Canadian enterprise you have shown yourself able to deal with it understandingly, and I feel sure that you will do so *persistently* also.

Wishing you all success,

I am,

Yours very truly,

W. SHANLY.

LETTER FROM MR. G. H. PERRY, C. E.

CHICHESTER, 25th APRIL, 1885.

Joseph Tassé, Esq., M. P.

Ottawa.

DEAR SIR,

Accept my sincere thanks for the very kind manner in which you alluded to my paper entitled "the River communication of the British American Provinces," in your statesmanlike and practical speech on Mr. White's motion on the "Ottawa River Canal System."

I regret that it has not been hitherto my good fortune to have had the honor of making personally your acquaintance, but you have been long known to me by reputation.

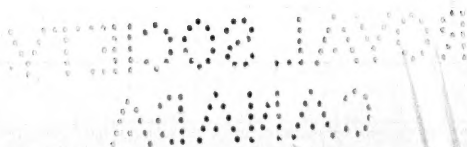
It is now thirty years since the late John Egan induced me to undertake the task of bringing the great measure you so ably illustrated before the people of Canada, and it was worth the time spent to be able to read your magnificent speech on the occasion.

The pamphlet to which you so kindly alluded was written for distribution at the Detroit Convention, 11th and 14th July, 1865, in which myself and the late Senator Skead were members of the delegation from the City of Ottawa.

I am, dear sir,

Very truly yours,

G. H. PERRY.



THE OTTAWA RIVER CANAL SYSTEM

SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. JOSEPH TASSÉ, M. P.

in the House of Commons, on the 20th April, 1885.

Mr. WHITE (Renfrew), moved :—"That in the opinion of this House the improvement of the navigation of the Ottawa and French rivers by a system of canals, so as to enable vessels to pass from Lake Huron (*via* said rivers) to the water on the St. Lawrence, is a work deserving the early consideration of the government."

Mr. Speaker,

I fully concur in the views expressed by the mover and seconder of this resolution. The scheme now before us is a great scheme, an important scheme ; one of the greatest, one of the most important ever submitted to this Parliament. If carried out—and it will be carried out, because it is vital to our national interests—it will create a revolution in the trade of the country, aye, in the trade of this continent. Many years ago an American statesman, the founder of the Democratic party, predicted that "the west was the future." That future has been reached ; it is the present for the United States. And we, also, shall see the day when our own west shall become, if not the ruling power, the great factor in our destinies. Since the prediction of Jefferson, territories have been organized, States have been created, some doubling their population in ten years ; cities and towns have sprung up as if by magic, and to day the richest and the most populous portion of the Republic lies on the western side of the Alleghanies. The producing power of this region has been

developed to an unparalleled degree—to such a degree that it not only disturbed, but even controlled the markets of the old world—to an extent indeed that, notwithstanding the wonted energy of our neighbours, their own means of transportation for the surplus products have proved insufficient. Such a result is astounding, when we consider that there are more railways in the United States than on the whole continent of Europe; that more than seven thousand millions of dollars have been spent on the construction of railways and canals; that the Erie Canal alone has absorbed more than sixty million dollars; and that the largest percentage of railway mileage is to be found in the Western States. In 1883, out of a total of 120,552 miles of railroad, the Western States could claim 70,345 miles—considerably more than one-half—built at the enormous cost of \$3,441,141,046.

Sir, the trade of the west is assuming the most gigantic proportions, and its importance cannot be overrated. One may judge of its ever increasing volume in comparing the exports of grain and breadstuffs from the United-States during thirty years; in 1850 the value was estimated at \$13-066,509; in 1860, at \$24,422,320; in 1870 at \$72,250,933, and in 1880, at \$288,036,835. Quadrupling the export of grain in a single decade was a stupendous leap. It is true that the year 1880, owing to exceptional causes, witnessed the largest export of cereals, but the quantity is still enormous, representing a money value of more than \$208,040,000 in the year 1883. It is not surprising that we have contended strenuously for a portion of that great and growing traffic. We have offered a shorter route to the ocean, the great route of the St. Lawrence, the natural outlet of the upper lakes. Sir, we are all proud of the St. Lawrence, whether we live on its banks or not. That noble river is the Mississippi of Canada. It was truly depicted by the eloquent Joseph Howe when he said; "Take the Italian's Po, the Frenchman's Rhone, the Englishman's Thames, the Ger-

man's Rhine, and the Spaniard's Tagus, and roll them all into one channel, and you then have a stream equal to the St. Lawrence." Forty millions of dollars have already been spent by the Canadian people on improving this route of the St. Lawrence, and no one will grudge the additional millions required to make our noble highway not only equal but superior to any American route. We have just enlarged the Welland Canal, our great link between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, till it can now accommodate boats of 1,500 tons, having a carrying capacity of 60,000 bushels; this is a most important result, the tendency in the construction of vessels being to increase their tonnage. Twenty years ago they did not carry more than 30,000 bushels, whilst now there are boats on the lakes which can transport 80,000 bushels. The larger the ship the lesser the freight. We have also enlarged the Lachine Canal at the other end to a navigable depth of 14 feet, but common sense tells us that the intervening section must have a uniform system, so far as the St. Lawrence and Welland Canals are concerned. So long as these canals are not enlarged, and a great effort should be made in that direction, I apprehend we are building up Oswego and Ogdensburg in bringing to them vessels of 1,500 tons from the lakes, to the prejudice of our Canadian ports. When the whole route is open to its fullest capacity propellers having cargoes of 50,000 to 60,000 bushels could descend from the lakes to Montreal or Quebec, or proceed to Halifax, without breaking bulk. This would be a grand, a glorious result for Canada. From the foregoing remarks, it will be seen that no one recognizes more fully than I do the importance of the St. Lawrence for the carrying trade of the west.

But, however valuable it may be, there is a route which in many respects outrivals even its great advantages. That route was for a long time our only means of communications with the west. It was followed by Champlain, when he, the first white, planted the flag of civilization on the shores of Lake

Huron in 1615; it was followed by LaSalle when he left Lachine in search of another and greater *Chine* which he could not reach; it was followed by our first missionaries, our first traders and voyageurs, when fur formed the staple trade. As it has already been explained, it would unite the ocean navigation at Montreal with Lake Huron. Its length would comprise 430 miles, distributed as follows: French River, forty-nine miles, Lake Nipissing, thirty miles, Mattawa River, forty-six, and the Ottawa River, 305 miles. Trade follows the safest, the shortest and the cheapest route. This is one of the first laws which it obeys. It knows no frontier, no country, no nationality. It may have preferences, but not to its detriment. If this contention be undisputed, then those who advocate the construction of the Ottawa ship canal have established their case on the soundest possible basis. As it has been already demonstrated, the route of the Ottawa is the shortest communication between tidewater and the lakes. Taking Chicago as the point of embarkation, and Montreal or New-York as the destination, the Ottawa route is 270 miles shorter than the St. Lawrence, and 338 miles shorter than by the Erie Canal. And if, instead of Montreal or New-York, we take Liverpool as the terminal point, the distance by the Erie is 4,983 miles, and by the Ottawa 4,207 — a difference of 776 in favour of the Ottawa, or of more than 1,500 miles for a round trip. Such is the superiority of the Ottawa ship canal that it is also by 150 miles the shortest route between the west and the New England States. And this is no mean advantage, for a large proportion of the products of the west is transhipped to those States for home consumption. Besides, the journey would be shortened by the fact that the length of canal on the Ottawa and French rivers, would be one-sixth of that on the New-York route, and 20 per cent. less than on the Welland and St. Lawrence. The Ottawa follows a more northern route, and its cool waters are thus better adapted than those of the

Erie or the Mississippi for the carriage of grain. It would open later and close earlier than the St. Lawrence. But as there would be a saving of nearly four days on each round trip from Chicago to Montreal, the difference would be more than compensated. The Ottawa is also the safest route. It would save 600 miles of lake navigation, a navigation full of risks and dangers. The cost of transportation would be thus reduced, not only by the shortening of the distance, at least 10 per cent. but also by the diminished rates of insurance, which can fairly be put at 30 per cent. less. To realize how dangerous is the navigation on the lakes, let me submit the following figures relating to the wrecks and casualties thereon to American merchant vessels, from 1875 to 1883 :—

Year.	No.	Tonnage.	Total Loss.	Part'l Loss	Lives Lost.
1875	515	150,297	..	...	69
1876	509	158,873	51	458	94
1877	288	99,286	39	249	50
1878	464	143,837	63	402	63
1879	391	139,171	33	358	48
1880	547	207,318	48	499	76
1881	533	189,009	56	427	109
1882	490	184,720	34	456	78
1883	453	175,940	46	407	100
	4,191	1,439,449	370	3,306	747

Lest the very great losses shown by these figures should raise a suspicion of exaggeration, I may say that they are taken from the Life Saving Report published at Washington. I regret that our statistics are so incomplete that I do not care to give the figures representing Canadian losses during the same period. The Ottawa route presents another feature of much consequence. One of the disadvantages against which the St. Lawrence has to contend is the absence or the insufficiency of return freights. Such a trade is a prime necessity to shipping. With this route the boats, laden with grain or minerals, could return to Chicago, Duluth,

Port-Arthur and other ports with a cargo of sawn lumber, for which there is an inexhaustible demand in that region. Better prices and an additional market would be thus secured for our lumber, the importance of which as an export article is only excelled by agricultural products. We all know that Chicago is the greatest centre of distribution, not only for grain and live stock, but also for lumber. During the year 1883 it received by lake and by rail 1,909,910,000 feet of lumber, of which more than 1,065,000,000 were reshipped, the railroads receiving \$4,000,000 and the shipowners \$3,000,000 for transport. A large portion is dressed and manufactured in the city, representing, for that year, about \$12,000,000. In 1862, the quantity forwarded did not exceed 189,277,079 feet—which shows what expansion that branch of the Chicago trade has assumed. While on the subject, let me observe that the magnificent pineries of the lumber-producing States of the West—Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota—are fast disappearing. Thirty years ago the northern peninsula of Michigan contained a quantity of 150,000,000,000 feet, whilst it was reduced in 1880—the whole State included—to 35,000,000,000 feet. So rapid is the extinction of those forests that Mr. Charles S. Sargent, who prepared the report on the forests of North America for the last American Census, comes to the conclusion that the west must soon depend for building material upon the more remote pine forests of the Gulf region or those of the Pacific coast. I may here mention, incidentally, that the prospect foreshadowed in the last volume of the United States census should not be lost sight of by the limit holders of Canada. Mr. Speaker, if the Ottawa has not the magnitude of the St-Lawrence, it is second in importance only to that noble river. It has a course of about 750 miles, a great number of tributaries, and drains an area of nearly 80,000 square miles—an area as large as that of all the Maritime Provinces, or the whole of the New England States. That region contains millions of acres.

of fertile land, notably on the shores of Lake Temiscamingue, which would be opened to cultivation. The falls of the river are renowned throughout the world, and they can supply more motive power than is actually employed on the entire continent. Manufactories would rise all along the watercourse, and mills would be erected to grind the grain and prepare it for the foreign market. The valley of the Ottawa would become one of the great manufacturing districts of America, and this city, which is already a great railroad centre, and a great industrial centre, would reach the highest rank, thus fully justifying the choice made of her as our political metropolis. At the entrance of French River, where a safe and deep harbour has been found, another Buffalo would rise in a few years. In a word, the Ottawa Canal would produce for this region the wonders which the Erie Canal has realized in the State of New York, where it has built almost a continuous city, with its suburbs, from the Hudson to her western border. Its beneficial influence would also affect, to a high degree, the city of Montreal, from which most of our grain is shipped to Europe and to the Lower Provinces. A leading paper of Milwaukee, having discussed thoroughly the subject, did not hesitate to assert that with such a route Montreal would supplant New-York as a shipping port for the grain trade. Instead of increasing, however, the export trade of Montreal has been declining steadily during the last four years, owing to various causes, which, it is true, were not all under our control. Whatever may have been those causes, the following figures, which cover fourteen years, are full of significance and demonstrate how pressing, how important it is to increase our means of transportation :

Year.	Bushels.
1870.....	13,691,310
1871.....	16,186,484
1872.....	19,522,957
1873.....	17,912,572

Year.	Bushels.
1874.....	16,739,580
1875.....	15,363,184
1876.....	18,167,642
1877.....	17,346,678
1878.....	20,899,187
1879.....	22,755,946
1880.....	27,200,905
1881.....	18,567,360
1882.....	14,828,023
1883.....	16,533,397
1884.....	14,775,655

Sir, we have not yet reached the millenium. Mr. Gladstone dreamed once of universal peace, of the settlement of all international difficulties by arbitration, but unfortunately it was a mere dream. To-day the clouds of war are hanging in almost every sky, and we have not escaped this universal alarm. I hope that our neighbours have given up the aggressive spirit which they exhibited on two solemn occasions, and which it was our duty, our patriotic duty, to resist triumphantly. I hope they have ceased to cherish the idea of a so-called manifest destiny, by which the American Eagle's wings would overshadow the whole continent. But whatever may be their present aspirations, we should not fail to provide for the future. *Si vis pacem para bellum*. In a case of war, the St. Lawrence could not protect us, and our boats could be blown up without the enemy setting foot on our soil. On the contrary, the Ottawa, running through the heart of the country, would be a safeguard of our trade, furnish a safe basis of supplies, and offer a line of defence practically unapproachable. Its military advantages have already been recognized by the Imperial authorities, the Grenville Canal, the Carillon Canal, not to speak of the Rideau Canal, having been built by them in the first place. The Ottawa route would be in reality the national route, the St. Lawrence, on its upper course, as well as the great lakes, being half American. The Welland Canal is as much suited to American

as to Canadian interests, as long as the canals of the St. Lawrence are not properly enlarged, whilst the Ottawa belongs as much to Ontario as to Quebec, and is a thoroughly Canadian waterway. Mr. Speaker, as long as our domains in the west were not open to cultivation, the construction of the Ottawa ship canal could, perhaps, be delayed, however, profitable it might have been to divert the trade of the American, west to our seaboard. But now, that we have a western country, susceptible of indefinite expansion, of illimitable possibilities, a country superior in extent and agricultural wealth to that of the United States, a country which contains three-fourths of the wheat producing area of the continent; now that we shall have several millions of bushels of wheat to export annually, the best, the hardest wheat in the world, this enterprise becomes almost an immediate necessity. It is true, we shall have the Pacific Railway to transport our cereals, but this exit will not be sufficient. Our neighbours have already built three grand trunk lines across the continent, without supplying adequately the wonderful demands of trade. And I venture to predict that ere long we shall have to build a double track between Winnipeg and Port Arthur—nay, that the day is not far distant when we shall have again to span the continent with a railway further north. I can also foresee when there will be an uninterrupted chain of navigation from the Rocky Mountains, from the remote parts of the Saskatchewan to the seaports. To see those great works accomplished it will not be necessary to live the days of Mithras.

In the meantime our Pacific Railway will require as many auxiliaries as it can procure for the export trade of the West. Let us not forget that the trade of the lakes is assuming a magnitude undreamed of, representing annually hundreds of millions of dollars, although it is not half a century since the first cargo of grain left Chicago for Buffalo. Let us not forget, also, that the day is not far distant when Lake

Superior shall draw a trade to its ports equal, if not superior, to that which centres at Chicago. We have already a share of that traffic; many of our boats visit Duluth, Marquette, and other American ports, and it only requires foresight, boldness and enterprise to direct a large portion of that commerce through Canadian channels. Last summer I accompanied the Press of Ontario in their excursion to the west, and a most pleasant, a most instructive excursion it was; I visited with them Duluth and Port Arthur, the lake termini of the Northern and Canadian Pacific Railways, and I was amazed at their rapid growth. In that very year the shipments of wheat and flour from Duluth even exceeded that of Chicago. In two years the population of Port Arthur had increased from 1,700 to 6,000 souls. The mayor, a most representative man, whose operations cover a million of dollars a year, presented us a most glowing address on the prospects of the town, claiming for it a future as brilliant as that of Chicago. It is true that we were promised previously, on a similar occasion, by the mayor of Winnipeg, another Queen of the West, but I really think that the capital of the prairie Province should be satisfied with having been dubbed by Lord Dufferin, in his hyperbolical language, as the "umbilicus" of the Dominion. Two years previous, I had accompanied the fourth estate as far as the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which was then Moose Jaw, and after having visited our great lakes, as wide as the Caspian Sea, in which the whole United Kingdom could easily, if not safely take a plunge after having admired the grand, the enchanting, the unparalleled panorama of their surroundings, after having contemplated the vast, the boundless rolling prairies, the seas of golden vegetation, through which runs the railway, I came back with an enlarged, a more accurate comprehension of our immense domain, of its capabilities, of its future greatness, and prouder than ever of my country, of the Canadian name. For the last two years the people of

Manitoba—or rather a portion of them—have been clamouring against the dreaded monopoly of the Canadian Pacific Railway. An honorable member who sits on the other side of the House felt so much depressed on the subject that he almost preached rebellion—preached what others are practising just now.

To escape that so called monopoly—although the rates of the Canadian Pacific Railway are lower than those of the American competing lines—our Manitoba friends seem determined to build a railway to Hudson's Bay—which, to many, till a few years ago, would have looked as feasible as the fantastical journey of Jules Verne to the stars. But we live in the age of wonders. Napoleon said that impossible was not a French word. The men of the north wish to repeat the boast. Supposing that a railway to those arctic regions be not visionary, the bay could not be made navigable for more than three months—four, at the utmost—whilst they could have seven months of uninterrupted navigation on the lakes and on the Ottawa ship canal. The Hudson's Bay scheme may not be accomplished before many years elapse ; but, in the meantime, the best energies of the Prairie Province should be concentrated, I think, towards securing the more practicable route, which is their natural outlet to the ocean. If a railway be built towards Hudson's Bay, who can say that in these days of railway consolidation, extension and absorption, the enterprising managers of the Canadian Pacific Railway will not succeed in acquiring a controlling interest ? Whilst, with the Ottawa ship canal, no such result could be apprehended. Its rates would be regulated by the Government, and they would act as a moderator, as a counterpoise to any railway monopoly. It may be said that the projected canal will injure the Pacific Railway, for which we are making such sacrifices. No doubt the railroad must run alongside the canal, throughout a great portion of its eastern course. But, instead of deprecia-

ting the railroad, the Ottawa ship canal would be a powerful feeder, its most effective complement. It would increase its light freight and passenger traffic, the two paying powers. The special functions of railways and canals are becoming more and more distinct, the heavy, the less profitable freight, being assigned to water routes. The Canadian Pacific Railway could not, for instance, carry the very rich minerals around Lake Superior and the Upper Ottawa region, with advantage to its proprietors and customers, the actual condition of the Grand Trunk amply proving that a large amount of heavy traffic may be far from profitable. I am not of those who believe that canals are the superannuated competitors of railways, that they have outlived their age, that their usefulness is gone. And the Government show their appreciation of their advantages in demanding an appropriation of \$2,287,900 on their account for the current year. Water transportation is just as necessary to railroads as railway transport is necessary to water navigation. The best patronised lines of railways in the State of New-York are those that run close to the Erie Canal, the New-York Central having even had to quadruple its track. The Grand Trunk Railway has felt, for a long time, the necessity of doubling its track, although it is bordering upon the St. Lawrence for several hundred miles. It will be remembered that in 1878 M. de Freycinet, an eminent engineer, then Minister of Public Works of France, submitted a vast plan of internal improvement, by which it was proposed to spend from \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000 per annum during fifteen years, two-thirds of which was intended for railways and the balance for canals. The views expressed by M. de Freycinet cover the very grounds which I am now discussing, and I will quote them briefly.

“It is acknowledged that water ways (or canals) and railways are destined, not to supplant one another, but rather to supplement each other, and thereby effect a natural division of duties.

To the railway belongs the higher traffic, which demands speed and punctuality, and which can command high rates for its services. To the navigable waterways appertain those heavy and cheap commodities which only yield to the railways an illusory profit, and which encumbers rather than benefits them.

"Navigable water courses fill another function. By their very existence they restrain and moderate the charges on such goods as seek the railway; they are, for the railway manager, a warning not to exceed the line beyond which commerce would not hesitate to sacrifice regularity to economy. In this respect navigable waterways are much more powerful than any competition that may arise between different railway lines, inasmuch as the latter carry on their struggle with similar weapons, and generally wind up by coming to a mutual understanding rather than draw on themselves inevitable ruin; whereas the boat and the rail naturally appropriate to themselves the special traffic for which they are adapted.

"Such is the actual work of the canals, to outstrip the railways in point of cheapness, and even to compel the latter to follow their example, as constituting the only serious opposition they have to encounter on this continent, and thus becoming the moderator, curb and counterpoise to railroad monopoly. Assuredly this part is an important one and sufficient to justify the special solicitude of the Government and the generosity of the legislator."

Mr. Speaker, as it has been so well demonstrated by preceding speakers, this is not the first time that Parliament has been called upon to consider the merits and demerits of this scheme. As far back as 1856 a survey was made of the proposed route, under the direction of a very eminent engineer, Mr. Walter Shanly, and two years afterwards another survey was ordered under Mr. Clark, another distinguished member of the same profession. Both came to the conclusion that the route was feasible, that it was the best, the safest, the cheapest, the shortest exit for the western trade. Mr. Shanly estimated that 58 miles of a canal of 10 feet would be necessary, entailing a cost of \$24,000,000.

Mr. Shanly held also the opinion that the route could be adapted to vessels of 8 feet for about \$16,000,000. On the other hand, Mr. Clark estimated the whole cost at \$12,000,000, for a depth of 12 feet, and the length of canalling at 21 miles, not including the Lachine Canal or the improvements below St-Anne's locks. The main difference in their estimates is due to the fact that Mr. Clark suggested the damming up of the Ottawa and Mattawa rivers to a far greater degree than was proposed by the project of Mr. Shanly, thus reducing the length of canalling. As the Lachine Canal, the St-Anne's lock, the Carillon and Grenville Canals have since been enlarged, the expenditure to be incurred would be thus reduced by several millions of dollars. In 1863, in 1868 and 1870, the importance of this scheme was recognized by Parliament, committees were appointed, and by each, favourable reports were submitted. The first committee selected as chairman the late lamented Robert Bell, the builder of the pioneer Ottawa railway, the Prescott and St. Lawrence. The other members of the committee were Messrs. A. Mackenzie, Dawson, Morris, Simard, Kierkowski, D. A. Macdonald, Haultain and Morrison. The subsequent committees were presided over by the universally respected member for the county of Ottawa, another popular member—so popular that he has attained royal rank in a very democratic country. Valuable as they were, the labours of those committees have not yet produced all the fruits which one could have reasonably expected from them. Such an important matter could not fail being brought before the Dominion Board of Trade—an institution which has rendered great service, which is now defunct, but which ought to be revived. At its meeting of 1871 a very exhaustive paper was submitted by Mr. George H. Perry, a prominent engineer, who had been engaged in the survey of the proposed canal, and who at all times warmly and ably advocated this scheme. I may add also that the association found

a very zealous and indefatigable champion of that scheme in the person of the late lamented Senator Skead, one of the most enlightened and truest citizens the city of Ottawa ever possessed. I have mentioned the hon. member for East York as being a member of the first committee that studied the question of the Ottawa ship canal, and although I do not agree with most of his political opinions, I am bound to say that I fully approve of his views on this very matter. In 1865 that hon. gentleman made a speech, a very eloquent speech, on Confederation, and in the course of his remarks he paid the following tribute to the scheme now before the House :

“ I think it is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of this colony that our canal connections with the upper lakes should be perfected as early as possible. Our canal system must be improved, so as to accommodate the large trade that is coming from the North-West. On the northern shores of Lake Superior we have sources of wealth that are perfectly inexhaustible. We read only the other day that a mountain of iron had been discovered close to the coast, quite sufficient to supply the demands of the world for 500 years. We have in that locality an abundant supply of minerals of all kinds, and unless our canals are made capable of carrying that traffic, it will necessarily find channels in another direction. There is an agitation among a portion of the community for making a new canal from Toronto to the Georgian Bay, and I admit it is very desirable it should be constructed, though I do not think it ever can be, it is entirely beyond our resources at the present time. I am convinced that the true route for a canal (if a new one should be undertaken) to the Georgian Bay, is up the Ottawa, because that would be giving a great backbone to the country. If we had a fine canal, capable of carrying vessels of war in that direction, it would be a splendid means of defence, as well as a great highway for the commercial products of the West.”

I presume it was with the intention of giving a temporary substitute or a useful adjunct to the Ottawa ship canal—so

impressed was he with the importance of this region—that the same hon. gentleman undertook, in 1874, as soon as he was Prime Minister, with very extraordinary haste, without an instrumental survey, the building of the Georgian Bay branch, one of the many unsuccessful experiments of a very unsuccessful Government. Two years later, that hon. gentleman held three public meetings in the county represented by the hon. mover of this resolution—the County of North Renfrew. That campaign was a very disastrous one for the Liberal party, and there the Liberal leader met a foeman worthy of his steel, that eloquent, that courageous tribune of the Conservative party, Sir Charles Tupper. The champions of our two great parties vied in their eulogy of the Ottawa Valley. Sir Charles Tupper said that the “Ottawa Valley is suited to be the great channel of communication between the old settled part of Canada and the magnificent prairies of the North West.” The hon. member for East York used the following language :—

“ I am tolerably well acquainted with the geographical features of the Ottawa Valley, having for the last fifteen years been actively interested in all the questions which most closely affect its people. The very first year I was in Parliament I was one of a committee appointed to investigate the question of canal navigation on the Upper Ottawa, and from that time I have been perfectly satisfied that the Valley presents the greatest facilities of any route upon the continent for the transportation of the products of the North-West to the Atlantic Ocean, or rather I should say to the head of the Atlantic navigation.”

From these remarks, it is evident that the Ottawa ship canal will meet with some favour on the other side of the House ; and it has already been advocated in the instructive speech which has been delivered to-night by the hon. member for North Ontario (Mr. Cockburn). I do not know what are the views of the leader of the Opposition, but I feel confident that if the hon. member for East York was

still commander of the Liberal forces, his active sympathy would be given to the motion of the hon. member for North Renfrew. Mr. Speaker, I will not leave the House under the impression that the leaders of the Conservative party—the progressive leaders of a progressive party, the party that has built the greatest bridge, one of the wonders of the age, the greatest railway, a greater wonder of the age—have not fully realized the pregnant results that may be expected from that measure. The late lamented Sir George E. Cartier was always one of its warmest supporters. And his views, I am proud to say, were in full accord with those of the right hon. gentleman who has conducted for so many years the affairs of this country. At a public dinner given in 1860, in this city, the right hon. gentleman proclaimed in the following language that the Ottawa ship canal had an importance almost equal to that of the Pacific Railway, and that its construction would be accomplished ere long.

“ To consolidate and bind those great colonies together, the link referred to by the chairman, the Ottawa Canal, had almost become a necessity, and the day when it must be constructed is much nearer than their friends believe. As soon as the resources of the country now rapidly developing, become adequate to the undertaking, both the canal and the Pacific Railway must be constructed, and no voice would be raised against the great national work, which would open the Western States and colonies to the seaboard.”

Sir, the boldest and the most expensive part of this programme has already been successfully accomplished, or is on the eve of accomplishment. The great dream of laying the iron band across this northern portion of the continent has become a reality. We may now almost believe that Canada is a nation. But there are still great deeds to be accomplished. Let the right hon. gentleman continue his noble work, let him remove the physical obstructions to the free navigation of the rivers between Lake Huron and our sea-

ports, and we shall see in a near future thousands of wealth-laden steamers and barges plying on their waters. I know, sir, that for the moment the resources of the country are heavily taxed in order to accomplish public works, which no people of our numbers would have dared to execute or even to conceive. The works may increase our public debt, but they multiply our resources, our population, our taxing capacity, in a far greater degree. They do not impoverish, they enrich the country. They are the most productive national investments. Such is the importance of the measure now before us that it cannot be brought too often nor too urgently before Parliament and the country. If we cannot now accomplish the scheme in toto, let us adopt its principle, let us devote every year a portion of the public moneys towards its achievement, let every improvement, every section, every lock, every chamber, be made in accordance with a general plan, and in a few years we shall have the satisfaction of seeing the whole scheme fully realized. Sir, we are engaged in a great struggle with our neighbours for the carrying trade of the West. That struggle is fraught with momentous results, it means the commercial supremacy on this continent. Such a goal is well worth fighting for. Two years ago the State of New-York abolished its tolls on the Erie Canal, and now it has to pay, out of direct taxation, for its maintenance, not less than \$1,600,000 per annum. In his message of last year, Mr. Cleveland, the Governor of New-York—now President of the United-States—fully endorsed that policy in the following terms:—

“ Remarkable proof of the increased commerce attracted to those waterways, by the abolition of tolls, is found in the fact that the shipments of grain from Buffalo, by canal this year, aggregated 42,350,916 bushels, against 29,439,688 bushels last year; and the statistics, which will be submitted by the superintendent of Public Works, will exhibit like increase in the other freights which comprise the great bulk of the canal traffic.

“ These figures assure those interested in canal navigation that the liberal policy adopted by the State will make a reasonably certain continuance of employment and opportunities for the capital and labour of our citizens. They also give promise to the people, who have assumed the expense of maintaining the canals, of a full return, in the benefits which must accrue from securing to our State a traffic of such importance as to add materially to its business and wealth.”

That expenditure of \$1,600,000 may be a great sacrifice ; it may show how the State of New-York values the trade of the west, but let us not forget that from 1862 to 1883 the canals produced a revenue of \$56,795,944, against an expenditure of \$27,210,264, the surplus revenue reaching the sum of \$29,585,680, not to speak of the numberless advantages, direct or indirect, which it has produced.

Sir, England was made great and glorious by the carrying trade of the world. Let us follow in her footsteps. Let us secure if possible the trade of the west, and the trade of the Pacific will fall into line. We are already one of the great maritime powers ; our vessels float on every ocean, but I feel alarmed at the fact that our tonnage has decreased of late years. It has been said that the nation that had the most ships has had the most influence. Let us then make a most energetic effort to regain the ground lost. Let us accomplish an enterprise which will develop our internal trade and marine, and foster at the same time our foreign commerce. It would be an unwise policy to improve only the frontier ; let us give width and breadth to the Dominion in developing its central points. Let us forge another powerful link between the east and the west, and let us cement and consolidate some of the most essential parts of our economic and national fabric. Let us be equal to the occasion. Let us rise to the height of the interests involved. “ Don't give up the ship,” exclaimed the American sailor Lawrence, in dying bravely for his country. “ Don't give

up the ship," I would say to the Government—we are all deeply interested in its course towards our destiny,—but do give us one of the safest, one of the most important channels through which it could be directed, distributing wealth all along its passage. Impressed as I am with the magnitude, with the necessity, with the far reaching results of this plan, I have no hesitation in saying that the Government that will accomplish this work will be a patriotic, a far-seeing Government, a Government that will deserve to be commemorated in Canadian history.

